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## Africa Review

11 August 1978

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## AFRICA REVIEW

11 August 1978

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The odds favor a successful transition to civilian rule in Nigeria, and, despite turbulent periods, the process will have only a peripheral effect on Nigerian foreign policy. Once in power a civilian regime will continue the main lines of current policy, although there is sure to be substantial vocal militancy, particularly on southern Africa.

This publication was formerly entitled Africa Weekly Review.

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Africa Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis, with occasional contributions from other offices within the National Foreign Assessment Center. The Africa weekly focuses on major African issues and their implications. We solicit comments on the articles as well as suggestions on topics that might be treated in future issues. Comments and queries can be directed to the authors of the individual articles or to [REDACTED] Chief, Africa Division [REDACTED]

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Zaire-Angola: Prospects for Peace

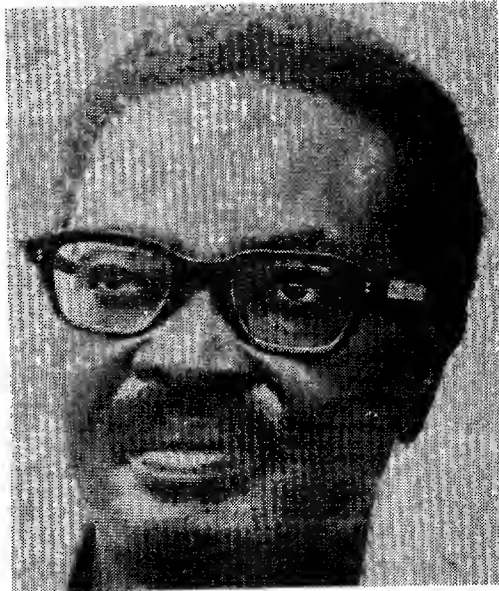
A series of meetings that began last month in Brazzaville between Zaire and Angola has resulted in a significant lessening of tensions between the two countries. Both sides recently exchanged ambassadors and are on the verge of establishing full diplomatic relations. Perhaps in response to Western--including US--pressure, Zairian President Mobutu early last month showed signs that he might be willing to take a more conciliatory attitude toward Angola. In conversations with US officials, Mobutu expressed relief that Angola has taken some steps to disarm the Katangan insurgents. He added, however, that he continues to be suspicious of the Angolans because President Neto had not kept his word in the past on controlling them.

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contrasted starkly with his hostile public statements directed toward Luanda in the wake of the Shaba invasion by Angolan-based Katangan rebels last May.

The Angolans apparently were reluctant to meet, and neither side expected much from the negotiations. The productive initial meetings by the delegations in Brazzaville, however, paved the way for two additional meetings between Mobutu and Neto at the OAU summit in Khartoum. African pressure probably was instrumental in getting them together. We do not know whether the Soviets or Cubans exerted pressure on Luanda to adopt a more conciliatory attitude toward Kinshasa. Mobutu and Neto are longtime antagonists and



President Neto

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President Mobutu

ideological opponents. They probably realize, however, that their serious internal difficulties--both face severe economic, political, and social problems--can be better handled if they reduce the tension that exists between them.

The initial agreement calls for the repatriation of refugees who wish to return to their respective homelands; the establishment of controls to ensure that the refugees are disarmed; the setting up of a demilitarized zone on both sides of the Zairian-Angolan border; the creation of a multilateral African observer team, approved by the OAU, to monitor the demilitarized zone; and the reopening of the Benguela railroad.

The lessening of tensions has resulted in some gestures of good will. Luanda reportedly has begun to withdraw Zairian refugees at least 250 kilometers from the border area and has released over 50 Zairian fishermen and other prisoners who had been held in Angola.

There is still a long way to go, however, before the agreement can be fully implemented. The two sides apparently have agreed on the location of the checkpoints to be used by the OAU verification committee. The composition of the committee, however, has not yet been determined, and there appears to be lingering disagreement over whether Nigeria and Rwanda will serve on it. Once the committee is established, moreover, it faces numerous logistic and supply problems before it can begin to operate.

Refugee repatriation is a complex and sensitive issue. Considerations involving mutual security will have to be closely monitored, and allegations of subversion could arise from attempts to repatriate the large numbers of each country's refugees. There are approximately 250,000 refugees in northeastern Angola and over 15,000 Angolan refugees in Zaire's Shaba Region.

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The continued ability and will--over the long term--of both Mobutu and Neto to control the other's dissidents could prove to be a major stumbling block. While the dissidents are quiet for the moment, there is no guarantee that their quiescence will last. Although Neto apparently has disarmed large numbers of Katangans and transported them away from the Zairian frontier, roving bands of dissidents and infiltrators remain in the area. Their activities could cause Mobutu to allege that Neto is not keeping his word on controlling the rebels.

On the other hand, Mobutu has the problem of his continuing assistance to some of the Angolan insurgent groups. Mobutu doubtless expects that the establishment of an international border commission empowered to conduct onsite inspections would significantly restrict his ability to funnel aid to the insurgents. Although Angola's rebels probably anticipate major logistic problems if the border is neutralized, they do not believe Zaire's rapprochement with Angola presages a major reduction of foreign military and financial support to the movement.

The question of support to the insurgents has always been a major point of contention between the two governments, and it is likely to come up again. Previous negotiations between Zaire and Angola have foundered in part because of this issue. Neither side may, in fact, exercise the control over the other's dissidents that each side attributes to the other.

Although generally regarded as a primary export route for Zairian copper, the opening of the Benguela railroad would also provide a boost to other sectors of Zaire's economy. Although Zaire's copper and manganese could be more easily exported by the rail line, the route is more important as a conduit for the Shaba Region's vital imports. In addition, Zaire would benefit from the receipt of hard currency from Zambia in payment of transit fees and would recover railroad cars trapped in Angola for the past three years. All of the benefits would take several months to materialize and are dependent on continued political stability in Zaire and Angola and efficient operation of the port of Lobito.

The railroad probably will not be able to operate at full capacity for some time. Major repairs must be

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made to the railroad bridge at Dilolo on the Angolan-Zairian border, and UNITA continues to attack portions of the line in central Angola. In a special communique issued late last month, UNITA stated its firm intention to continue sabotaging the rail line. UNITA believes its international credibility rests in large part on its ability to prevent the railroad from functioning, and it is unlikely sufficient external pressure can be brought to bear on the guerrillas to force a change in their position.

Zambia has not had any role in the Zaire-Angola negotiations. There is a lingering hostility on Mobutu's part toward Zambian President Kaunda for his failure to deter the Katangans from using Zambian territory to enter Shaba. The opening of the Benguela railroad would, however, be an important development for Zambia.

In sum, many hurdles remain before the agreement can be fully implemented, and a lasting reduction of tensions between Kinshasa and Luanda will be difficult to achieve. The basic hostility and mutual distrust between Mobutu and Neto probably will continue. Each may feel too insecure to make costly concessions to the other, opening the way for a resumption of allegations and a return to the stormy past. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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Nigeria: The Evolution of Foreign Policy and Civilian Rule\*

We believe that the quality of Nigerian relations with the United States during the next 18 months or so will depend primarily on US policy, with a strong but not completely exclusive focus on US policy toward southern Africa. Other Nigerian concerns in relations with the United States--oil prices, availability of development capital and technology, North-South and nonaligned issues, inter-African security problems, perceptions of Soviet and Cuban activity in Africa, US arms sales--will be secondary.

Nigerian policy will remain relatively straightforward on the southern African problem. The Nigerians will continue to support negotiations in the southern African context, but only as long as these negotiations hold serious promise of achieving the objective the Nigerians hold in common with other Africans--the dismantling of white minority governments in favor of rule by or in the name of the black populations. The Nigerians will simultaneously support the liberation groups--though not by significant direct military intervention--and the tactical flexibility that a Nigerian regime shows in its day-to-day relationships should not be allowed to create the illusion that it has moderated its objective.

On the secondary issues, we expect to continue to see a good deal of pragmatism from the Nigerians. The amount of pragmatism, however, will be influenced by the atmosphere created by perceived US action or inaction in the main arena.

\*These are the Principal Judgments from a recent Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, Nigeria: The Evolution of Foreign Policy and Civilian Rule, August 1978. If you desire a copy of the report, please contact [REDACTED]

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We do not now see a civilian regime doing much to alter these basic approaches. Although there is sure to be a substantial amount of vocal militancy--which will be sincerely felt regarding southern Africa--the fundamental elements in Nigeria's economic, social, and demographic situation argue for continuity and compromise as against sudden and radical change.

In our view, the odds still favor a successful transition to civilian rule in Nigeria, meeting the October 1979 deadline to which the military leaders remain committed. There will surely be turbulent periods during this passage, and we make no forecast as to how long civilian rule will last once it is installed. But we believe that the process will have at most only a peripheral effect on Nigerian foreign policy during the coming 15 months.

Specifically, we believe that Nigerians:

- Will work with the United States on the Rhodesia problem, but will not accept any arrangement that is not also acceptable to the Patriotic Front and will do relatively little more under present circumstances to persuade the Patriotic Front leaders to moderate their positions.
- Will work similarly with regard to Namibia.
- Will view with grave suspicion any signs that the United States is expanding cooperation with South Africa in any field--political, economic, or nuclear.
- Will gradually become more uneasy about the role of Cubans and Soviets in Africa, but will be reserved toward efforts to create an international African security force.
- Will not turn toward greater cooperation with the USSR in international arenas unless Western efforts in southern Africa collapse utterly.

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- Will continue in their domestic affairs to function so that--within the limits imposed by nationalistic political requirements--they will attract foreign investment and assistance.
- Will, in the United Nations, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and other international forums, seek ways to make visible their sense that their country, given its size and resources, should continue to play a leading role in African and Third World affairs. (SECRET NOFORN)

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### The Nigerian Left and Future Politics

The Obasanjo regime is keeping an increasingly close eye on local leftists, particularly those in the labor movement, and on Soviet and Cuban activities in neighboring Benin as Nigeria approaches the scheduled lifting of the ban on politics in October. The resumption of political activity, which is intended to facilitate the organization of parties for elections next year, will bring Nigeria to the last and most difficult phase of its program to restore civilian rule in October 1979.

The period ahead is likely to be turbulent primarily because of the rivalries politicking will engender among Nigeria's competing regional and ethnic interests. Regime leaders are concerned that indigenous leftists--possibly with outside encouragement--could attempt to exploit the situation to advance their fortunes and cause further political disruption during the final stages of the transition from military to civilian rule.

Nigeria, unlike most black African states, has a distinct Communist movement backed by the Soviet Union. There is no reasonable prospect, however, that a Communist-dominated regime could come to power in Nigeria in the foreseeable future. Nor do we believe that Nigerian leftists will emerge as a major political force under civilian rule. Leftist labor leaders, on the other hand, could be in a position to wield greater influence. We also believe that the Soviet Union will not significantly increase its low-keyed support for the small Nigerian Communist movement or engage in the kind of political maneuvering that could undermine Moscow's hopes for maintaining normal relations with a legitimately elected Nigerian Government. It is in the Kremlin's interest to emphasize establishing productive ties with whatever civilian regime emerges, regardless of its ideological makeup, because of Nigeria's position as Africa's most populous and potentially most influential state. The overwhelming weight of the Soviets' effort to expand

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their influence in Nigeria lies in dealing with the established government. Moscow seeks further opportunities to increase Nigeria's limited reliance on Soviet military and economic assistance, areas that offer far greater possibilities to the USSR at this time than the uncertain prospects of Nigeria's indigenous Communist movement.

#### Nigerian Communists and Socialists

Although the weak and factionalized Nigerian Communist movement--which is confined largely to Lagos--is likely to play only a minor role in the country's return to civilian rule, it is nevertheless gearing up for the legalization of politics. Hardcore Nigerian Communists--those who are believed to be under direct Soviet influence or control--account for only a fraction of the Nigerian left, which itself composes only a small part of the local political spectrum. Accurate figures are not available, but the underground movement probably numbers no more than a few thousand out of Nigeria's population of 70 million or more.

During the early 1960s, the movement received an annual covert subsidy from the Soviet Union of less than \$150,000, which was barely enough to keep it alive. Two years ago, the Soviets provided the movement a paltry \$30,000 to contest local government elections. Before Nigeria's ban on political parties in 1966, the movement operated through the quasi-Communist Socialist Workers and Farmers Party. Since then, it has pursued its activities through leftist trade unionists associated with the former Nigerian Trade Union Congress, the Nigerian Committee of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, and the Soviet-Nigerian Friendship and Cultural Society. Regular contact between the Soviet Embassy and the movement has resumed, and Secretary General Ipidapo Fatogun visited Moscow last year to discuss plans and funding for the remainder of the transition to civilian rule.

Nigerian Communists contribute to the pro-socialist orientation of the Nigerian left, but there is no evidence that they dominate it. They are generally drowned in a babble of socialist rhetoric--some of it highly unorthodox--that comes from Nigeria's indigenous, homegrown leftists. Soviet propaganda probably provides some grist for

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socialist-oriented students, journalists, lawyers, and university professors. Indigenous leftists led the anti-Western outcry in Nigeria over Western opposition to recognition of the pro-Soviet Neto government of Angola in 1975 and over the assassination in 1976 of former Nigerian Head of State General Muhammed, who backed the Neto government against its South African - aided rivals.

Nigerian socialists were well represented on the government-appointed committee that last year drew up Nigeria's draft constitution for civil rule. They pressed unsuccessfully for a constitution that would have proclaimed Nigeria a socialist state committed to work for socialist economic goals. The draft constitution calls for continuation of a mixed economy, more or less like the present system, with the government to manage all major sectors. Nigerian socialists have been among the most persistent critics of the draft constitution. The issue of whether or not Nigeria should be declared a socialist state, however, did not become a subject of contention in the constituent assembly, which approved without apparent difficulty the section calling for a mixed economy.

#### Leftwing Political Parties

When the political ban is lifted, a socialist-oriented party built around a motley group of indigenous leftists will probably emerge in alliance with or parallel to a resurrected quasi-Communist workers party. Such groups are likely to exercise little clout in Nigerian politics, although leftwingers may win a few seats in the federal and state legislatures. The issue of inflation and how to manage the economy at a time of declining oil revenues could give leftist politicians more ammunition in political campaigning than they might otherwise enjoy.

The major parties that emerge, however, will be based primarily on regional and ethnic appeal and not political and economic philosophy. The exigencies of Nigerian politics will cause many leftists to pragmatically ally themselves with major political groupings or presidential contenders, such as veteran Yoruba tribal politician Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who espouses a vague form of African socialism. One of Awolowo's former associates, Samuel

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Ikoku--a member of the major Ibo ethnic group--may be among the contenders for leadership of a socialist party. A Marxist intellectual and a former leftist trade union leader, Ikoku's progressive brand of socialism is designed to appeal to youth and labor.

#### Leftist Labor and Politics

The Nigerian Government embarked on a major restructuring of the country's trade union movement three years ago. Its aim was to create a relatively docile labor organization and install a friendly set of labor leaders to steer Nigeria's potentially restive workers safely through the transition to civilian rule. The old union leadership was ousted, the four competing labor federations fused into one central organization, their affiliation with international labor organizations prohibited, and stronger wage and antistrike controls imposed. In the process, the average Nigerian wage earner has suffered a decline in real income and seen his aspirations for a better life largely thwarted.

Today the regime is dragging its heels on giving Nigeria's revamped labor movement the green light to begin operating. It is discomfited by the strong leftist cast of the new national union leadership and by the leadership's apparent intention to carve out a greater role as the country prepares for civilian rule.

Although strikes are banned, the leaders of the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) have threatened to call a work stoppage by key unions unless the regime soon authorizes funding for the organization, the registration of member unions, and the collection of dues through a compulsory checkoff. Their strategy--which is clearly intended to test the government's resolve--is reportedly the brainstorm of Wahab Goodluck, an old pro-Soviet former labor leader who was proscribed by the government last year from all labor activity after it was proven that he had accepted Soviet financing in the 1960s. His protege, Hassan Abedayo Sunmonu, is the current NLC president.

The government's delaying tactics reflect its concern over persistent reports that Sunmonu and other

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leftist NLC leaders are engaged in underground political activities with Goodluck, who intends to run for the federal parliament as a candidate of a resurrected workers party. The government is also investigating reports that the leftist NLC leadership is receiving clandestine Soviet financial assistance. According to one report, the USSR has so far turned down requests by NLC leftists for financial help on the grounds that they do not yet have sufficient control of the organization to warrant it. If the government finds that the Soviets are funding the NLC, it will cut planned financial aid to the organization by half, place the NLC leadership under surveillance, and restrict its movements. This suggests that the military regime intends to try to maintain a firm hand in directing labor affairs and that it will not tolerate disruptive labor tactics.

The election last spring of a leftist leadership slate for the NLC reflects that group's superior organizing skill and indicates that a strong leftist element exists within Nigeria's trade union movement. Leftist-oriented unions account for 12 of the 43 unions that make up the NLC and that were formerly associated with the WFTU-affiliated Nigerian Trade Union Congress, one of the four former labor federations in Nigeria. The NLC, with a membership of 880,000 to 1 million workers, has considerable political potential if its officers prove capable of effective leadership. The new organization is already showing, however, many of the divisive tendencies that have characterized Nigerian labor since well before the country's independence in 1960. Even the leftist trade unionists are beset by severe ideological and personal rivalries.

The monthly journal of the Nigerian Communist movement has suggested that the NLC should unite with socialists to form a political party. The government's new draft constitution for civilian rule and the constitution of the NLC both appear to proscribe such a linkup. While a socialist-oriented party could count on private support from leftwing trade unionists, the US Embassy doubts that a leftist political party could effect a political marriage with the entire NLC.

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Continued inflationary pressure on wage earners and the advent of open political activity this fall are likely to breathe more political life into Nigeria's union membership and could lead to greater agitation for relief from the wage-price squeeze.

### The Benin Factor

The Nigerian Government views Soviet and Cuban involvement in neighboring Benin with growing concern and is exploring a security arrangement with Benin aimed at eliminating the Communist presence there. Nigerian leaders are particularly concerned that Benin might be used as a base for clandestinely aiding Nigerian leftists and otherwise interfering in Nigeria's internal affairs during the transition to civilian rule.

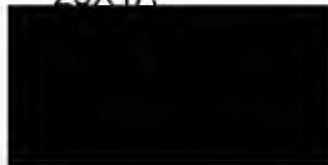
Nigerian Head of State General Obasanjo met two weeks ago with Beninese President Kerekou to express Nigeria's apprehension about the Soviet and Cuban role in Benin. He also discussed Benin's defense needs, and it was agreed that the Nigerian Army Chief of Staff, General Danjuma, would soon visit Cotonou. Obasanjo's aim, [REDACTED] may be to lay the groundwork for a security pact with Benin leading to the gradual withdrawal of Soviet and Cuban military advisers.

Since an attempted mercenary coup in January 1977, Benin has welcomed Soviet military support, which to date has included armored vehicles, antiaircraft weapons, small arms, and an estimated 30 military advisers. Benin's interest in Cuban assistance also increased after the abortive coup, and some 55 Cuban military and security advisers are now in the country. Kerekou maintains that Benin needs these Communist arms and advisers to safeguard his radical regime. The recent delivery of additional Soviet military equipment and ammunition from Libya will probably only heighten Nigeria's apprehension about Soviet and Cuban intentions in Benin. (SECRET NO-FORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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Nigeria: Facing Foreign Exchange Stringency

Nigerian foreign exchange reserves fell to \$2.2 billion in July, a drop of \$2.0 billion since the beginning of the year and the lowest level in four years. Reserves are now equivalent to only about two months worth of imported goods and services. The foreign business community in Nigeria, which is experiencing longer delays in receiving payments from the Federal Military Government, believes that Lagos will devalue the naira as the next step in relieving the foreign exchange crunch.

The rapid drawdown of reserves reflects the decline of oil revenues--which account for more than 90 percent of export earnings--coupled with the rise in imports of capital goods and services essential to the economic development effort. In March 1978, oil exports reached their lowest level in more than six years, at 1.5 million barrels per day. Demand for Nigerian crude has fallen off as cheaper supplies from the North Sea and Alaska have become available. Furthermore, rigid Nigerian oil pricing policies have hampered efforts to keep up with traditional competitors, particularly Libya and Algeria.

Already this year the government has taken a number of initiatives in an attempt to boost export earnings and ward off serious balance-of-payments problems. Among these measures are:

- Oil price cuts in the first and second quarters and a recently announced additional discount to third-party customers who sign long-term contracts for specified crudes and to producing companies that raise liftings beyond last quarter's average.

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- Implementation in April of an austerity budget restricting consumer imports, suspending wage increases and government subsidies, and limiting federal spending to 1977 levels.
- Renegotiation of foreign contracts for major infrastructure projects to stretch out the payment periods.
- Arrangement of a \$1 billion Eurodollar loan, which has been completely drawn down, and negotiation (near completion) of a second \$1 billion Eurodollar loan.
- Pursuit of barter arrangements with Japan, Poland, Romania, and several US firms that would enable Nigeria to receive capital goods and food in exchange for oil.

Nigeria appears to be headed for a \$3 billion current account deficit in 1978, even if imports respond quickly to the April restrictions. Although the oil companies are beginning to respond to pricing incentives, oil exports for the year will average 1.8 million barrels per day at best, down from last year's 2.0 million average. The austerity measures should hold down the rapid increase in imported services, but necessary expenditures for continuing projects will keep the deficit on services more than \$3 billion.

The devaluation reportedly under consideration would do little to improve this year's current account deficit. Indeed, its immediate effect would be to raise the import costs of the development program. Although devaluation would in the long run encourage local production and import substitution, Lagos in the months ahead almost certainly will have to scale back its development effort and/or seek additional international financing.  
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Rhodesia: A Look at the Internal Settlement\*

- The biracial transitional government has made only halting progress in implementing an internal settlement in Rhodesia and preparing for an election prior to transferring power to a black majority government by the end of the year.
- The new government has been unable to halt the fighting. The amnesty program, on which it was counting heavily, has made little headway, casting doubt on whether a meaningful election that might attract outside support can be held.
- The government is also plagued by bickering between black leaders, who want to implement changes more quickly, and whites, who want to preserve their influence. Rivalry among the black leaders presents an additional problem.
- The internal leaders recognize the weaknesses of the internal settlement and are using it as a bargaining tool with the outside parties to the problem even as they move ahead with their own plan.

\*The Key Points above are from a memorandum entitled Rhodesia: A Look at the Internal Settlement (RPM 78-10309), published on 7 August 1978. Copies of the memorandum may be obtained by contacting the author.

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- Ian Smith and to a lesser extent his black colleagues recognize that Joshua Nkomo's participation is essential to a lasting solution, but they have been unable to persuade him to participate in the internal settlement.
- Some sort of weak black-led government will probably emerge at the end of the year, but its prospects for ending the war and gaining international approval are poor.
- The internal leaders may be hoping, therefore, that the internal settlement can demonstrate some staying power before they consider new talks within the framework of the UK-US settlement plan. (SECRET NOFORN-NO-CONTRACT-ORCON)

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Gabon: Detention Camp Uprising

The detention camp used to house Beninese nationals awaiting repatriation to Cotonou erupted in violence last Saturday when frustrated youths stoned passing cars and roughed-up several passengers. The specific reasons for the uprising are not clear, but it is possible that mounting tension--generated by previous Gabonese attacks on the Beninese community and a growing weariness with detention camp life--may have triggered the outburst. Gabonese efforts to quell the uprising resulted in the death of three Beninese and serious injuries to several others, [REDACTED]

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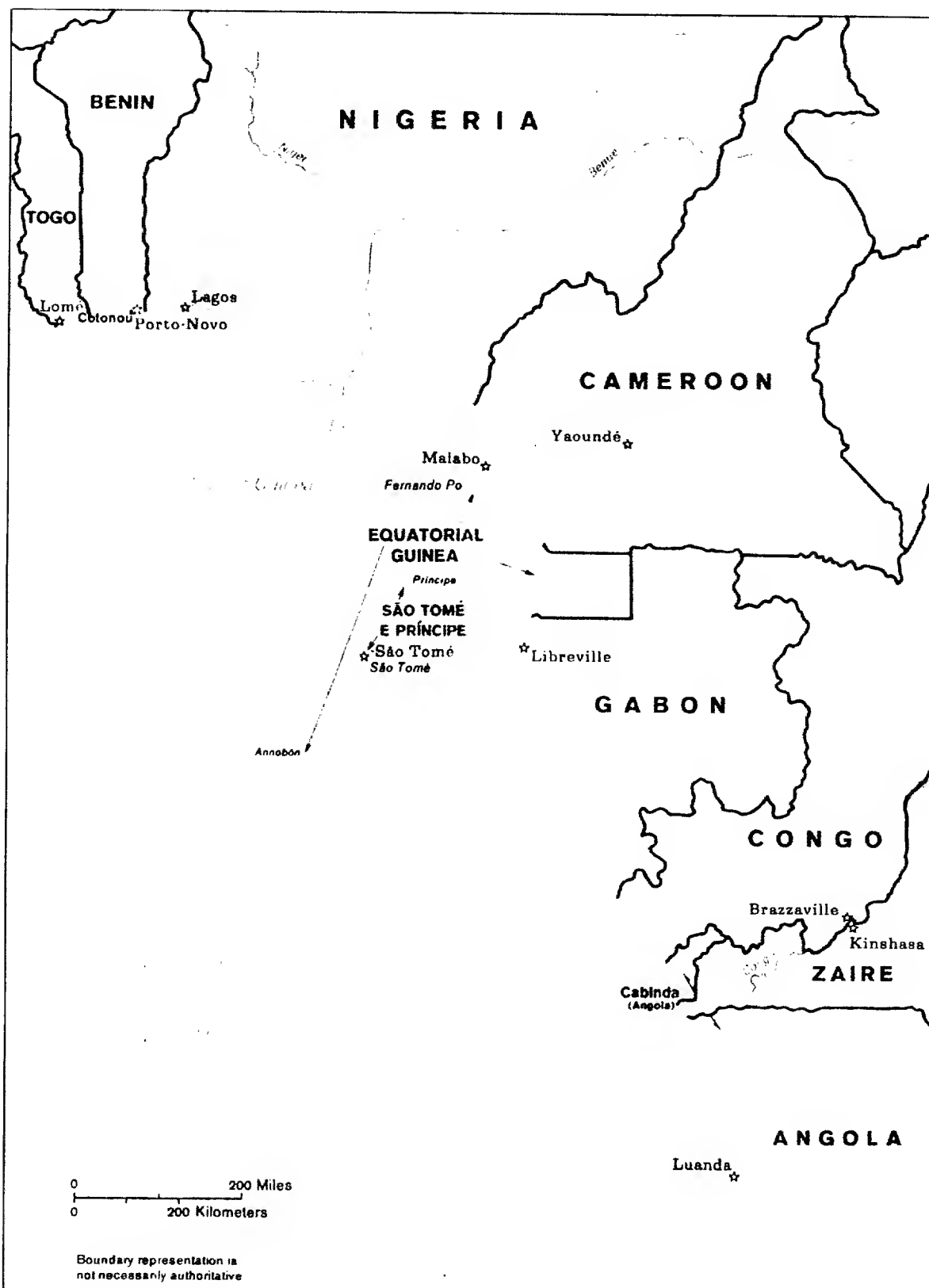
An uneasy calm has returned to the camp, but Gabonese President Bongo realizes that the longer the Beninese have to cool their heels, the greater will be the likelihood of a recurrence of violence. Bongo would like to expedite the deportation of the Beninese, but Benin's President Kerekou has obstructed the Gabonese President's plans. Kerekou refuses to permit the returnees to enter Benin by land and insists that they be returned directly by air. Bongo has attempted to placate Kerekou by arranging charter flights, and Air Afrique reportedly has scheduled additional flights to facilitate the Beninese return.

The Beninese Government bitterly attacked Bongo for the lack of protection afforded the Beninese community in Gabon and accused him of having personally ordered the attacks against the community. The first Beninese returnees have charged that Gabonese police engaged in looting, pillage, and rape against Beninese awaiting departure. Kerekou also charges that Bongo deliberately repatriated businessmen in order to confiscate their property, while allowing those with professional skills to stay in Gabon.

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Kerekou is apparently determined to make life as difficult as possible for President Bongo. He can be expected to use every opportunity to blame Bongo for the hostile acts taken against Beninese nationals and also for Gabon's involvement in the mercenary raid on Cotonou in 1977. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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The Organization of African Unity\*

The formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 was the outcome of mounting concern among African leaders over a trend toward polarization of moderate and radical African states in the early 1960s.

Historically, there had never been a political structure encompassing all of Africa's diverse groups, but as independence from European colonialism gained momentum, multiple movements for African unity sprang up. The first, comprising 12 moderate French-speaking countries, was formed in Brazzaville in December 1960. This was countered by the creation a month later of a Casablanca Group linking six radical states in North and West Africa. A number of moderate English-speaking states, concerned about the Casablanca Group's ideological stance, in 1962 joined with the Brazzaville Group, which then became known as the Monrovia Group. A preindependence lobby of representatives of liberation movements and of states from outside the area was active in East and Central Africa. The moderates and radicals both proceeded to create institutions and adopt charters presenting their claims to speak for Africa.

By early 1963 the African voice was shrill and divided, and on every side there was a growing desire for a united organization. As a result, a meeting of all the African foreign ministers was held in Addis Ababa in May 1963 for the purpose of drafting a new charter for a continentwide organization. Although it was based on a separate Ethiopian draft, the proposed charter drew extensively on the ideas formulated earlier by the

\*These are the Key Points from a recent research paper prepared within the Office of Regional and Political Analysis entitled The Organization of African Unity (RP 78-10283, July 1978). If you desire a copy of this reference aid, please contact [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

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Monrovia Group. The follow-on summit meeting of all African heads of state completed the charter and created the OAU as the sole all-African political institution--actions subsequently ratified by the member states.

Regional organizations continue to exist and are accorded observer status in the OAU. They are expected to conform to the OAU charter, however, and to have a rational geographic base and some economic or technical function.

Since its earliest years, the Africans have increasingly insisted that the OAU should be the first forum to which African disputes are referred, that there should be no interference in the internal affairs of African states, and that borders existing at the time of independence must be acknowledged. Acting under these principles, the OAU has been involved in the entire range of African crises over the 15 years of its existence: Algerian-Moroccan border clashes, Ghanaian harboring of subversive elements, recurring interventions in Zaire, the Nigerian civil war, the Israeli occupation of Egyptian territory, Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence, Somali territorial claims against Ethiopia and Kenya, the Angolan civil war, and dozens of lesser disputes around the continent.

In dealing with these problems, the OAU frequently works through international committees or plenary meetings so that national concerns are played down and all viewpoints are represented. It acts cautiously, with a heavy emphasis on factfinding and on discussions conducted by high-level mediators. With a few exceptions, it has managed to keep African problems out of the UN and other non-African forums. Actual solutions have been rare, with the OAU generally satisfied to defuse open conflicts and to keep disputants talking until they reach some accommodation of their own accord. Unlike the Organization of American States and the League of Arab States, which generally seek UN or third-party intervention to settle disputes in their areas, the OAU increasingly views attempts to impose the advice of outsiders as patronizing and an affront to African independence.

The OAU also performs a valuable, though often unheralded, service to its members by representing African

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interests to the outside world. It works within the UN through the African Group, which it has transformed into an effective bloc, and it uses every other international organization in which Africans are members to enhance Africa's role and increase its benefits. The one institution bringing all the states together, it is the agent for lobbying efforts and the chief organizer of prestigious events such as African trade fairs and cultural festivals.  
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